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**Consumer Price Index
Chicago-Gary-Kenosha, IL-IN-WI CMSA
February 2003**

Consumer prices in the Chicago-Gary-Kenosha metropolitan area rose 0.8 percent in February, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported today. This increase was double the 0.4 percent rise in February last year. The February 2003 Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) was 184.1 (1982-84=100). Over the past 12 months, Chicago area retail prices increased 3.0 percent. This was well above the 0.1 percent rise in the previous annual period, but comparable to the average February-February gain in the previous three years (1999-2001).

A continued rise in gasoline prices coupled with higher costs for food and shelter were responsible for about three-fourths of the latest gain in the Chicago area all items CPI-U, commented Peter J. Hebein, regional commissioner of the BLS regional office in Chicago. Higher price tags on apparel and moderate increases in the components for recreation, other goods and services, and medical care were responsible for the remainder of the increase. The education and communication component posted a sizeable decline over the month, but only partially offsetting the gains in other components. Chicago area energy prices advanced 6.4 percent over the month and 32.1 percent for the year. If the effects of the higher energy costs were factored out, the

Table A. Percent Changes in the CPI-U, Chicago-Gary-Kenosha, IL-IN-WI
(not seasonally adjusted)

Expenditure Category	Changes from preceding month							12 mo. ended Feb. '03
	2002					2003		
	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	
All items	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.2	-0.4	0.2	0.8	3.0
Food & beverages	-1	.1	-1	.3	-1.0	1.0	1.1	1.5
Housing	-4	.6	.2	.5	.2	.1	.4	3.6
Apparel	5.2	.3	-6	-7	-2.2	-5.3	2.1	-8.5
Transportation	.5	-1	1.1	-1	-2.4	.8	2.6	6.8
Medical care	-3	.4	1.7	-3	.5	1.6	.2	5.1
Recreation	.3	-4	.4	-7	.8	-8	.3	-2.0
Education & communication	2.4	.3	.3	.3	.2	.3	-.7	2.8
Other goods & services	-.8	.6	-.6	1.2	-.3	-.7	.3	3.4

Chicago area all items CPI-U would have risen 0.4 percent for the month and 1.4 percent for the year.

The housing component increased 0.4 percent in February. Almost all of the current increase was due to a 0.4 percent gain in the heavily weighted shelter index. The index for natural gas also contributed, rising 2.1 percent. Electricity costs remained unchanged. Over the past 12 months, the housing component was 3.6 percent higher thanks to a 3.1 percent increase in the shelter index and a 49.7 percent rise in the cost of utility natural gas.

The apparel component was up 2.1 percent. This was below the 4.1 percent gain last February but identical to the increase in February 2001. Over the past year, apparel prices were down 8.5 percent following declines that averaged 5.3 percent over the previous three February-February periods.

The food and beverages component rose 1.1 percent over the month. The cost of food at home (grocery food) rose 1.8 percent and the cost of food away from home increased 0.7 percent. The alcoholic beverages index fell 0.8 percent, only partially negating these increases. Over the year, the food and beverages component was 1.5 percent higher. The cost of food away from home rose 1.8 percent for the year and the cost of grocery food was up 1.1 percent. Alcoholic beverage prices advanced 2.2 percent for the year.

Gasoline prices were up 12.1 percent in February, accounting for most of a 2.6 percent hike in the transportation component. Prices at the gasoline pumps rose 49.0 percent over the year, leaving overall transportation costs 6.8 percent above their year ago mark. Despite their gains so far this year (23.5 percent), gasoline prices remain 13.4 percent below their most recent high reached in May 2001.

The education and communication component declined 0.7 percent over the month. Compared with a year ago, the component was up 2.8 percent following a similar gain in the previous annual period.

Medical care costs increased 0.2 percent, about the same amount as in February of last year. Over the past 12 months, the medical care component rose 5.1 percent. This was up from a 3.0 percent gain in the prior 12-month period.

The recreation component rose 0.3 percent, similar to the gain in February 2002. Recreation costs were down 2.0 percent from a year ago after posting a 7.6 percent increase in the previous 12 months (February 2001-2002).

The other goods and services component increases 0.3 percent in February. Over the past year, the other goods and services component advanced 3.4 percent following a 5.4 percent increase in the previous annual period.

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Scheduled release date for the March 2003 CPI:
Wednesday, April 16, 2003

CPI HOTLINE SERVICE PROVIDES LATEST INDEXES 24 HOURS A DAY

The all items CPI-U and CPI-W for the U.S. City Average and for the Chicago area are available to the public 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through the Bureau's CPI Hotline service. This recorded message also provides percent changes from the prior period and from a year earlier as well as the scheduled release date for the next CPI issuance. The Hotline number in Chicago is (312) 353-1880, menu option 2.

BLS FAX-ON-DEMAND SERVICE OFFERS CPI DATA 24 HOURS A DAY

If you have a fax machine and a touch-tone telephone, you can order current and historical CPI data and receive it within minutes by fax. The BLS Fax-on-Demand service offers over 280 documents containing the most popular BLS data including more than 65 documents containing CPI data for the nation, four regions, and 30 metropolitan areas. To receive by fax a catalog of documents available on the service, call 312 353-1880, select menu option 1, and when prompted, order document 1000.

BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE CPI

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPI's for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 87 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers 32 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Prices are collected in 87 urban areas across the country from about 50,000 housing units and approximately 23,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index. Prices of food, fuels and a few other items are obtained every month in all 87 location. Prices of most other commodities and services are collected every month in the three largest geographic areas and every other month in other areas. Prices of most goods and services are obtained by personal visits of the Bureau's trained representatives.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Separate indexes are also published by size of city, by region of the country, for cross-classifications of regions and population-size classes, and for 26 local area. Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices among cities, they only measure the average change in prices for each base period.

The index measure prices changes from a designated reference data - 1982-84 that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65.

For further details see the BLS Handbook of Methods, Bulletin 2490, April 1997, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index.

Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods

Chicago-Gary-Kenosha, IL-IN-WI (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from—		
	Dec. 2002	Jan. 2003	Feb. 2003	Feb. 2002	Dec. 2002	Jan. 2003
Expenditure category						
All items	182.4	182.7	184.1	3.0	0.9	0.8
All items (1967=100)	544.9	545.7	550.1	-	-	-
Food and beverages	176.6	178.4	180.4	1.5	2.2	1.1
Food	175.1	177.2	179.4	1.4	2.5	1.2
Food at home	179.1	183.5	186.8	1.1	4.3	1.8
Food away from home	165.3	164.9	166.0	1.8	.4	.7
Alcoholic beverages	196.6	195.2	193.6	2.2	-1.5	-.8
Housing	189.3	189.5	190.3	3.6	.5	.4
Shelter	232.0	231.8	232.7	3.1	.3	.4
Rent of primary residence ¹	225.4	226.1	226.9	2.6	.7	.4
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence ^{1 2}	239.4	239.7	240.0	2.2	.3	.1
Fuels and utilities	130.0	132.6	133.8	16.9	2.9	.9
Fuels	116.2	118.8	120.1	19.1	3.4	1.1
Gas (piped) and electricity ¹	119.1	121.6	122.8	18.9	3.1	1.0
Electricity ¹	102.0	102.0	102.0	.0	.0	.0
Utility natural gas service ¹	145.3	152.0	155.2	49.7	6.8	2.1
Household furnishings and operations	109.8	109.5	109.3	-2.6	-.5	-.2
Apparel	97.5	92.3	94.2	-8.5	-3.4	2.1
Transportation	147.7	148.9	152.7	6.8	3.4	2.6
Private transportation	144.1	145.7	149.7	7.7	3.9	2.7
Motor fuel	119.9	^R 132.2	148.1	49.0	23.5	12.0
Gasoline (all types)	118.9	^R 131.1	146.9	49.0	23.5	12.1
Gasoline, unleaded regular ³	115.7	128.3	143.9	51.0	24.4	12.2
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade ^{3 4}	126.5	138.6	155.1	47.6	22.6	11.9
Gasoline, unleaded premium ³	118.5	128.4	143.2	45.7	20.8	11.5
Medical care	287.1	291.8	292.3	5.1	1.8	.2
Recreation ⁵	107.7	106.8	107.1	-2.0	-.6	.3
Education and communication ⁵	118.6	118.9	118.1	2.8	-.4	-.7
Other goods and services	296.6	294.6	295.6	3.4	-.3	.3
Commodity and service group						
All items	182.4	182.7	184.1	3.0	.9	.8
Commodities	144.5	144.6	147.0	1.7	1.7	1.7
Commodities less food and beverages	125.7	125.0	127.5	1.9	1.4	2.0
Nondurables less food and beverages	136.5	137.0	142.1	7.7	4.1	3.7
Durables	112.0	110.4	110.3	-4.2	-1.5	-.1
Services	218.2	218.6	219.3	3.7	.5	.3
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	177.4	177.5	179.0	2.9	.9	.8
All items less shelter	165.7	166.2	167.9	3.0	1.3	1.0
Commodities less food	128.5	127.8	130.2	2.0	1.3	1.9
Nondurables	157.0	158.0	161.8	4.4	3.1	2.4
Nondurables less food	140.3	140.7	145.5	7.2	3.7	3.4
Services less rent of shelter ²	213.9	215.1	215.5	4.8	.7	.2
Services less medical care services	212.3	212.5	213.2	3.6	.4	.3
Energy	116.3	122.7	130.6	32.1	12.3	6.4
All items less energy	191.0	190.6	191.4	1.4	.2	.4
All items less food and energy	194.5	193.7	194.3	1.4	-.1	.3

¹ This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series converted to a geometric means estimator in January, 1999.

² Index is on a December 1982=100 base.

³ Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

⁴ Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

⁵ Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

^R Revised.

- Data not available.

Regions defined as the four Census regions. See map in technical notes.